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MONTREAL FOR ICAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2016
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [SY](#) [UNDP](#) [ETTC](#)
SUBJECT: UNDP FUNDING SYRIA AIRCRAFT STUDY

REF: DAMASCUS 1510

Classified By: Amassador Richard T Miller for reasons 1.5 b and d

11. (C) Following up on reftel, USUN contacted UNDP at a high level on April 7 for further information.

12. (C) The project, funded by UNDP with the participation of ICAO, is a study to look at two issues:

An expert from ICAO is doing a technical evaluation of Syrian Airlines so they can better evaluate investment options for aircraft, etc. The work is limited to the study. Any subsequent contracting or leasing of aircraft is up to Syrian Airlines.

They will also be looking at the current capacity of the Syrian Airlines staff and their training needs. Once these needs are determined, it is up to Syrian Airlines to get their people the appropriate training.

13. (C) During discussions with UNDP, USUN ECONOFF described the current U.S. sanctions against Syria and conveyed the USG concern that the study could somehow help Syria to evade U.S. sanctions under the 2003 Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. UNDP said that they would look into the matter.

14. (C) The funding of the project, as reported reftel, is correct. As noted above, ICAO will be doing the technical evaluation of Syrian Airlines.

15. (C) USUN is further concerned that this project, even in its most generous reading, stretches UNDP's development mandate to the breaking point or beyond. Given the pressing human needs in many countries around the world, and the UN's overall focus on achievement of the Millenium Development Goals, it is difficult to justify this kind of commercial project in a middle income country. USUN will pursue this issue both bilaterally with the Secretariat and at the next session of the of the UNDP Executive Board, which is scheduled for June 12-23 in Geneva.

BOLTON